

MEMORANDUM

TO: Amy Linné, BPRD

FROM: Mary Ellen Welch Greenway Improvements Project Team

MEETING DATE: 01/30/2024

SUBJECT: Design Meeting – Meeting Minutes

Meeting Topics:

- Coastal Resilience Measures for the areas around Carlton Wharf and Lewis Mall.
- Mary Ellen Welch Greenway Improvements Project.

Panelists:

- *Amy Linné, Boston Parks & Recreation Department*
- *Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space Cabinet*
- *Ryan Woods, Commissioner, Boston Parks & Recreation Department*
- *Kwanna Wise, Director of Community Engagement, Environment, Energy and Open Space Cabinet*
- *Alison Brizius, Commissioner, Environment Department*
- *Hannah Wagner, Climate Resilience Project Manager, Environment Department*
- *Delaney Morris, Senior Climate and Coastal Resilience Infrastructure Delivery Project Manager, BPDA*
- *Farah Dakkak, Weston & Sampson*

Greenway Meeting Goals:

This meeting was organized by BPRD and the design team to:

- *Re-engage with the Community on the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway Project.*
- *Discuss strategies for ensuring the Greenway is usable during and after storm events including stabilizing the greenway slopes.*
- *Discuss design concepts for a new path alignment and amenities.*
- *Gather updated input on how the community uses the Greenway and how they would like to use it in the future.*

Attendance:

50 total attendees.

Virtual Discussion (Including Zoom Chat Comments):

COASTAL RESILIENCE

Coastal Resilience: East Boston Waterfront Project at Carlton Wharf

- Extents of coastal flooding.
- The flood pathways from the harbor affects the greenway.
- City has had continued conversations with Massport.
- Acknowledgement that deployable barriers are a good short-term solution, but not a long term solution.
- For the Greenway due to space constraints we can't use the same approach as in North End (Langone & Puopolo Park) of elevating large areas land.
 - It would change character of the park since it would require raising the greenway and would impact the existing tree canopy.
- Massport must be on board to raise the area in the waterfront instead of elevating land (at the Greenway). This requires collaboration with multiple agencies.

Discussion / Question

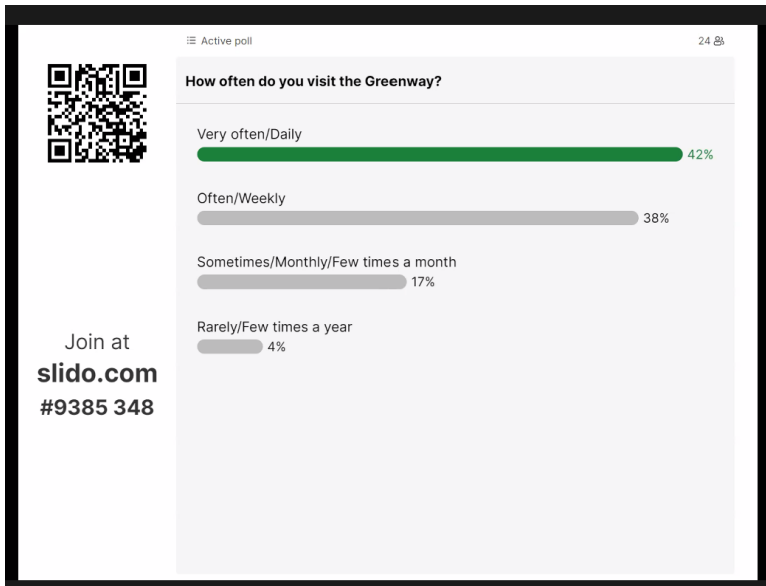
- Comment: in 1991 there was a bad storm and it went down the Greenway, but not in the neighborhood. For future storms, wouldn't the water be pushed then into the neighborhood.
 - Response: this is why we must focus on longer term solutions that are not deployables. Could not arrive at any solutions that maintain the space as it is without turning it into a berm. Must do work closer to Lewis Mall
- Question: Would the road be raised at Marginal Street?
 - Response: Only way to make it work is to cut off all routes for water to come in. Need to block the full length.
- Question: During winter the greenway is muddy because of the parking lot flooding. How will this be addressed?
 - Will discuss later during the park design process.
- Question: Question about deployable: since the deployable is immediate and this work will take a few years, has it been used and does it work?
 - Response: We have done practice deployments, the barrier is currently stored at the stadium and has to be loaded and brought to East Boston, and this is too far from the site to deploy. As part of the Greenway Improvements there's a request to put storage unit in the park and storage the deployable on-site.
- Question: what is the timeline for the coast projects?
 - This was the first project Rev Mariama had worked on and applied for the FEMA permit. We anticipated a response by now.
 - The City, Env. Dept, and Boston Parks had many conversations with Massport, but without a current leader it's been hard to move forward. It would be great for the community, to express interest in this area once a leader of Massport starts.

Deployable Flood Barrier

- Boston Parks will deploy the flood barrier when needed, and is studying a storage location on the Greenway near Sumner Street. It had been stored at the Stadium. Deploying it would be streamlined when it's stored on-site.

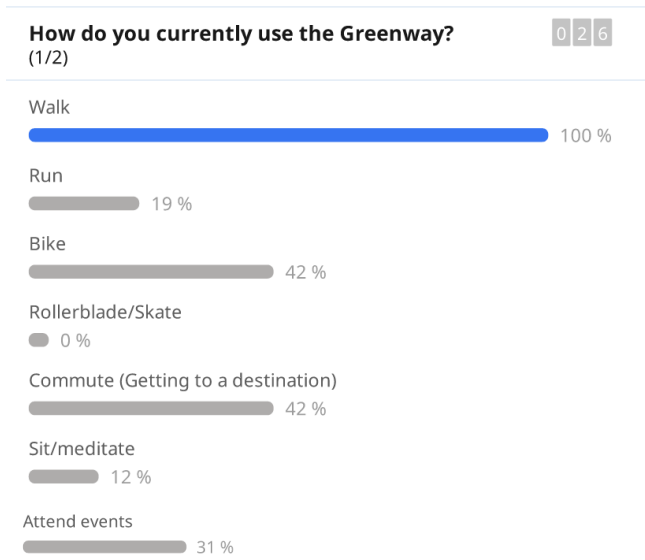
PRESENTATION: Greenway Design

- Commissioner Woods: It's been great to work with the Friends of the Greenway and to hear the ideas that they were working on.
 - Working on repainting the caboose, and to open the ice cream "shop".
 - It's been very positive to see the Memorial Garden.
- Timeline:
 - Community walk July 2022
 - First Design meeting Jan 1, 2024
 - Second Design meeting in March – April 2024
 - Permitting over the summer/fall: 2024
 - Construction in 2025-2026
- Survey Responses
 - 79 responses. It was up for about a month.
 - Lots of enthusiasm to improve the Greenway – and respondents were interested in general improvements.
 - Priorities included: adding shade, reducing flooding, increasing biodiversity, better amenities.
- Slido activity

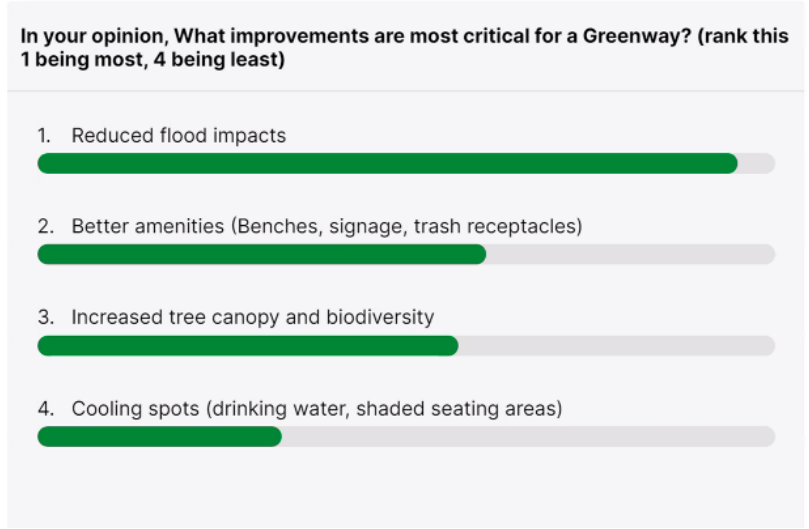


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- Existing Conditions
 - The project will focus on the City owned portion of the Greenway from Marginal Street to Porter Street.
 - Underpasses with community art, dual paths that separate users types.

- There are a few low spots with existing flooding - near Gove Street, erosion along the slopes, etc.
- Flood causes and impacts
 - High water table, drainage pipes overflow at high tide, low elevation, impervious adjacent surfaces, drainage issue from nearby sites
 - Solutions include: green infrastructure approaches
 - There is an evaluation difference now, and one path could be higher so one could be flooded but people can still access the Greenway.
- Slido: How do you currently use the Greenway?



- Slido: What improvements are most critical for the Greenway?



COMMENTS FROM CHAT

- The greenway connects so many resources - health center, schools, YMCA

- I go running on the greenway 3 - 5 times a week and am so grateful for it being in the neighborhood!
- Walking includes lots of Dog Walkers
- there needs to be another entrance to the Greenway needed

CONCEPT DESIGN OPTIONS

Concept 1

- Work with existing grades on site, and create a raised path where possible, while preserving vegetation, and current conditions.
- Looking at low spots where it can be raised slightly.

Concept 2

- Similar to concept 1: looks at some elevating of paths.
- Look at natural materials for retaining that fit in with rest of park's feel.
- Keeping impervious surfaces to a minimum.

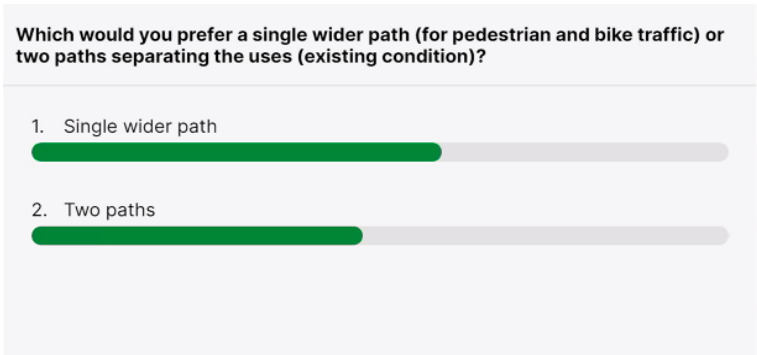
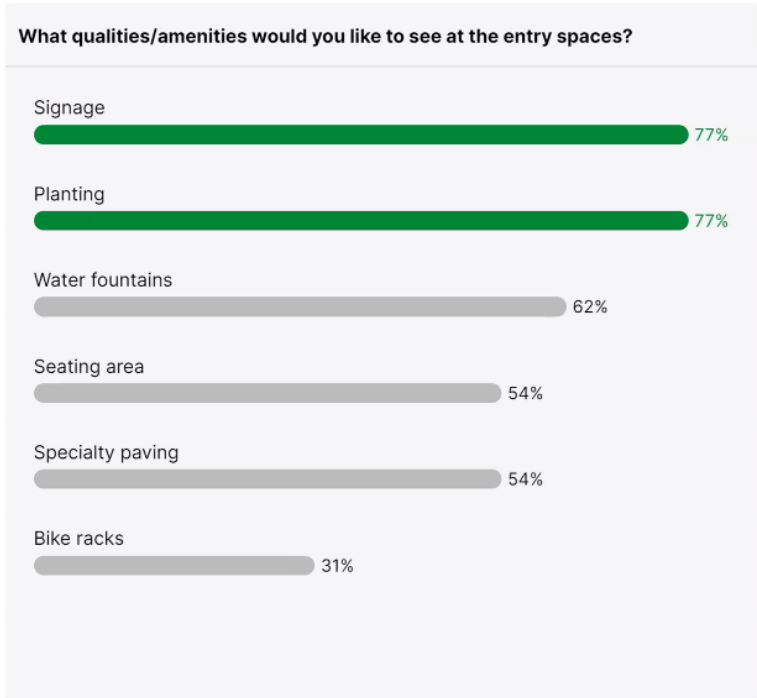
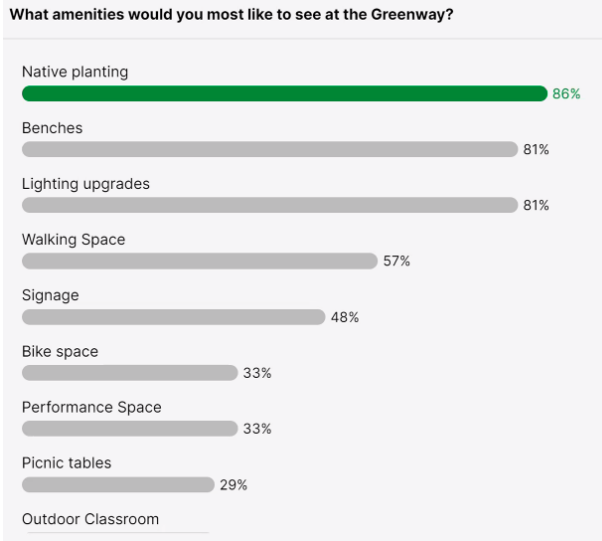
Concept 3

- Consolidate the 2 paths into one wide path. This decreases the amount of impervious surfaces, while increasing areas for infiltration.

Concept Precedents

- Use granite blocks to help with grade change. Similar to existing aesthetics
- Adding in benches, tables, trash cans, improved plant beds, etc
 - Looking into how to improve and strengthen lighting. The fixtures would be updated to LED. Will look into where there is a lack of lighting.

Slido question: Greenway amenities (Multiple responses allowed)



DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS

- Would the Greenway be open during construction? Hard to divert walkers, people with strollers, etc.
 - Amy: it would be tricky, but depending on duration - would need to work with the contractor.
 - Can reach out to BTM to see how they can help create safe bike routes during construction.
 - I am concerned about the two paths, one of them being floodable and one not, reduces capacity of Greenway by 50%. Can a goal be to maintain the current capacity of the greenway (in terms of users)
 - The idea of elevating one path came about through a review of the existing site conditions in which one path is sometimes slightly elevated over the other. When we delve deeper into the design development phase of the project we'll have more of an idea of where elevating the path is feasible while keeping the general park feel that the community loves. Could potentially be two raised paths but this would take more space, require more engineering and increased cost.
 - Thinking about vehicles using it - and the need for it to be fill, rather than boardwalks.
 - The water shouldn't stay for an extended period before it would drain, approximately 10-12 hours.
 - Will there be pumps? There are pumps now.
 - There are limitations on existing pumping now. Hard to rely on mechanical solutions.
 - Boston Water and Sewer have other ideas for future projects.
 - May be longer term improvement but right now at high tide not draining, aim not to rely on mechanical solutions.
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CHAT

- The greenway connects so many resources - health center, schools, YMCA
- I go running on the greenway 3 - 5 times a week and am so grateful for it being in the neighborhood! 😊
- It can also be an evacuation route
- The lighting also needs help 💡
- Lighting is a question - the park isn't open at night.
- The Massport portion in Bremen St park has new LED lights that are great
- Upgraded surface that's permeable for the walk/run path?
- Use the greenway daily for dog walks (morning and night). Increased light (or replacement of dead light posts) are needed.
- Thank you!
- The Southwest Corridor managed by DCR has, I believe, local contractors managing the maintenance. Is this a possibility for upkepping along the Greenway because the city does not have enough resources to do so.

- With this design could the elevated path be even a bit higher than the grade to the east/right of it with culvert piping running under the path
 - I second this!!
 - +1
- Otherwise all the stuff that washes out ends up on the path (leaves/trash/mulch etc)
- Do these concepts consider which side gets plowed in winter? Right now only the low-lying areas are the right width for the plow, but then it floods, freezes, fills with debris, it is unusable.
- love the waste can, wo old love to have one every fifty feet, or 30 feet.
- More water fountains would also be on my list
- The underpasses should have lightning
- and, of course, the staff to empty the waste cans
- Emergency posts (not sure what they are called)
- If single path means better maintained then that's great
- Would the wider path have clearly-defined walking and biking lanes?
- Try some solar lights & Solar phone recharging stations. Any car charging stations nearby
- Single Path could be wonderful.
- Is an engineering consultant being utilized to evaluate the different flood mitigation options to ensure that they will work?
- could you provide additional context on what speciality paving entails
- Waste bins with lids
- Water fountains that include dog water fountains
- thank you!
- The specialty paving might also connect the Greenway to the Harbor
- Porous paving materials come in all colors now
- When people are walking their dogs or strollers, sometimes it can be tough passing people on the current walking paths because of how narrow they are.
- And bumpy from tree roots (on the walking side)
- I really liked the picture of granite wall along wider single path.
- work with mass dot to resolve the water runoff from the underside of bridges over the greenway
- one path for bikes and people is difficult. but it is difficult now. Possible for separate bike path? skinny and gravelly maybe?
- tell me again, is there any place you can show us already somewhat transformed as you are suggesting?
- I use it for both biking and walking and worry about safety/ collisions. Also 2 path allow people who are fearful of dogs to avoid them
- If it needs to be closed during construction can the squares/corridors plans for improved pedestrian/bike safety be advanced (especially along Bremen and Bennington which are especially hostile to people not in cars) prior to the project starting?
- Will it be constructed in sections? If so, can parts remain open while others are being completed?
- For those who have questions about the one path vs. two path and what that might look like - if you have not had an opportunity to use the extended part of the Greenway that goes all the way down to Constitution Beach, it may be helpful to check that section out and see if you are

a fan or not. It is one path and quite wide and I have never had an issue passing people, bikes, dogs, or otherwise.

- This is helpful to visualize. I think 2 paths provides more opportunity for trees/canopies/shade.
- A lot of erosion is happening from water runoff coming from abutting paved parking lots .
- There is an entry point at Gove St so maybe construct in 2 phases, north and south of Gove St. The northern end of Orleans seems to have less traffic.
- If you end up doing two paths it would be good for them to be more frequently connected without grass or cobblestones in between - so people with strollers or people in wheelchairs can more easily switch from one path to the other
- If you are interested in getting updates on advocacy efforts from the Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, feel free to fill out this form to sign up for our email list:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFdptHeBg_UdQ99EOQ0XOFRIbjID-ZPV7AoI-ApShSvHjkw/viewform?usp=sf_link
- Dogs are not allowed In the Massport section. This has been voiced as a disappointment - the dog walkers love being out on the park section up to the dog park.
- With two paths there could be a meandering "local" and a straight shot "express"
- I would like to know more about the pumps that do, or don't exist. I remember lots of work being done, and yet the flooding got worse. the parking lot run off is getting much worse, all the interfering shrubbery on the lot is cut down by their lawn people. and the bern is eroding rapidly, more rapidly every month, thus blocking drain entries. So, are there pumps or even neglected but possible maintaining now?
- Are there ways to be notified of future public meetings on the greenway? I actually found out about it by walking past a sign. I would love to be put on an email list if it exists

For updates on the Greenway Project: www.boston.gov/welch-greenway
Greenway Project Manager Name and Email:
Amy Linne, BPRD, amy.linne@boston.gov

For updates of the East Boston Resilient Waterfront Project:
<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/east-boston-resilient-waterfront-project>

Project Manager Name and Email:
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